

flow into the shift converter and to direct the reformer output through the bypass conduit 144 and into the selective oxidizer. Inert gas (such as nitrogen) from a source 150 (shown in phantom) could be used to separately purge the shift converter while air is being used to purge the other components. In that case, the shut-off valve 152 and vent valve 154 (both shown in phantom) would be closed during normal fuel cell operation and open during purging. After an inert gas volume of at least about 3 times the volume of the shift converter has passed through the shift converter, the valve 152 would be closed. The vent valve 154 would remain open until the shift converter has cooled to approximately ambient temperature. Although the preferred shut-down procedure is to avoid the need for a supply of inert gas, the foregoing embodiment shows one method for handling components within the fuel processing system that use catalysts that are damaged by exposure to oxygen.

Amendment of the Claims

Please replace claims 1-14 and 16-17, with the following amended claim 1-14 and 16-17:

- 1 1. (currently amended) In the operation of a fuel cell system comprising (A) a
2 fuel cell and (B) a source of organic fuel, (C) a source of air, and (D) a fuel
3 processing system for converting an organic fuel into hydrogen, the fuel
4 processing system comprising multiple catalytic fuel processing components,
5 including a fuel reformer in series flow relationship with a catalytic shift
6 converter, wherein, during fuel cell operation, a load is connected across the
7 cell and organic fuel from the source is directed, in series, through the catalyst
8 bed of the fuel reformer, the catalyst bed of the shift converter, and fuel cell
9 anode flow field, a procedure for shutting down the fuel cell and fuel
10 processing system comprising the steps of:
 - 11 a. disconnecting the load from the cell and halting the flow of organic
12 fuel from the source to the fuel processing system; and, then
 - 13 b. purging the reformer of residual hydrogen by flowing air through the
14 reformer catalyst bed.
- 1 2. (currently amended) The shut-down procedure according to claim 1, wherein,
2 after step (a), the additional step (c) of purging the shift converter of residual
3 hydrogen by flowing air through the shift converter catalyst bed.
- 1 3. (currently amended) The shut-down procedure according to claim 1, wherein
2 the reformer and fuel cell are purged of residual hydrogen by passing air, in
3 series, through the reformer catalyst bed and thereafter through the fuel cell
4 anode flow field.
- 1 4. (currently amended) The shut-down procedure according to claim 1, wherein
2 the air purge of the reformer in step (b) is continued at least until the
3 concentration of hydrogen in the gas stream leaving the reformer catalyst bed
4 is below 4%, by volume.
- 1 5. (currently amended) The shut-down procedure according to claim 1, wherein
2 the shift converter and reformer are purged of residual hydrogen by passing air
3 through the reformer catalyst bed and shift converter catalyst bed.
- 1 6. (currently amended) The shut-down procedure according to claim 5, wherein
2 purging step (b) also includes passing a flow of steam through the reformer
3 catalyst bed and then the shift converter catalyst bed.
- 1 7. (currently amended) The shut-down procedure according to claim 6, wherein
2 in purging step (b) the steam and purge air are introduced into the reformer
3 catalyst bed substantially simultaneously.

- 1 8. (currently amended) The shut-down procedure according to claim 6 wherein,
2 in purging step (b), the steam flow through the reformer is done immediately
3 prior to purging the reformer catalyst bed with air.
- 1 9. (currently amended) The shut-down procedure according to claim 1, wherein a
2 selective oxidizer is disposed downstream of the shift converter, and step (b)
3 also includes purging the shift converter and selective oxidizer of residual
4 hydrogen by passing air, in series, through the catalyst beds of the reformer,
5 shift converter, and selective oxidizer.
- 1 10. (currently amended) The shut-down procedure according to claim 1, wherein a
2 desulfurizer is disposed upstream of the reformer, and step (b) also includes
3 purging the desulfurizer of residual hydrogen by passing air, in series, through
4 the catalyst beds of the desulfurizer, reformer, shift converter, and selective
5 oxidizer.
- 1 11. (currently amended) The shut-down procedure according to claim 1, wherein
2 the reformer and at least one other catalytic component of the fuel processing
3 system is purged of residual hydrogen by flowing air through the reformer
4 catalyst bed and the catalyst bed of such at least one other component, in
5 series, wherein the volume of air used for such purging step is at least three
6 times the volume of the largest purged component catalyst bed.
- 1 12. (currently amended) The shut-down procedure according to claim 1, wherein
2 the volume of air used to purge the reformer is at least three times the volume
3 of the reformer catalyst bed.
- 1 13. (currently amended) The shut-down procedure according to claim 1, wherein
2 in step (b) of purging the reformer using air, the purge air is introduced into
3 the reformer catalyst bed through an inlet that is located at a low point of the
4 reformer catalyst bed volume and passes through the reformer catalyst bed by
5 natural circulation, exiting the reformer catalyst bed through an outlet that is
6 located at a high point of the reformer catalyst bed volume.

1 14. (currently amended) The shut-down procedure according to claim 1,
2 wherein the fuel processing system includes a reformer and at least one
3 other catalytic fuel processing component arranged vertically in a stack, one
4 above the other, and in series flow relationship, wherein, in step (b), the
5 reformer catalyst bed and the catalyst bed of such at least one other
6 components are purged of residual hydrogen by flowing air therethrough, in
7 series, wherein the purge air is allowed into the stack through an inlet that is
8 located at a low point of the catalyst bed of the vertically lowest of such
9 catalytic component to be purged with air, and such air passes in series, by
10 natural circulation, through each catalyst bed of such fuel processing system
11 component to be purged, exiting the catalyst bed of the highest of such
12 catalytic components to be purged through an outlet that is located at a high
13 point of the catalyst bed of such highest component.

1 16. (currently amended) The shut-down procedure according to claim 14,
2 wherein the purging of the catalyst beds by natural circulation of air is
3 allowed to continue until the hydrogen concentration in the purge gases
4 exiting the stack of fuel processing components comprises less than 4%
5 hydrogen.

1 17. (currently amended) The shut-down procedure according to claim 14,
2 wherein, in step (b), the purge air for purging the catalyst beds is allowed
3 into and out of the stack of fuel processing components through valves
4 which are kept closed by energy produced by the fuel cell during normal
5 fuel cell operation, and which are de-energized and automatically open
6 when the load is disconnected from the cell stack in step (a).